

Information and Records Administrators Conference
December 15, 1972

CLASSIFIED PAPERS

Thank you, Marvin Kincaid, very much for your kind introduction.

Ambassador Eisenhower has asked me to express on his behalf his regrets for not being able to appear in person and his warm thanks for the work you have already done and which he knows you will continue to do in helping to deal with the problem of classified documents.

I recently stumbled across a humorous quip from Paul Louis Courier reflecting upon "printed matter." It seemed pertinent to the feeling of many with regard to the volume of classified paper generated by the Government. Let me read it to you:

"All printed matter contains poison, more or less diluted according to the size of the work, more or less harmful, more or less deadly One grain in a vat has no effect at all, in a teacup it causes vomiting, in a spoonful it kills - and there you have the pamphlet."

Well, if this is the effect of one pamphlet you can imagine the consequences of 30 million classified documents which are produced every year by this Government. Mr. Courier would probably call it a nuclear holocaust.

I can't agree with Mr. Courier's judgment on the consequences of printed matter, but there were unquestionably serious deficiencies in our handling of classified documents which led President Nixon to sign Executive Order 11652 in March of this year. As you all know, the Order has two primary objectives: (1) To reduce the amount of material being classified and safeguard it better; and (2) To declassify material earlier and on the basis of automatic schedules.

Delivering a talk so close to the Christmas holidays, I couldn't resist the urge to try and draw a parallel between this talk and Dickens' Christmas Carol. Accordingly, I would like to talk to you today about

Classification Past, Classification Present and Classification Future. Turning first to Classification Past, let me review the progress which has been achieved since the Executive Order became effective in June.

First, the Interagency Classification Review Committee has become active in pursuing the objectives of the Executive Order. Ambassador John Eisenhower was named by the President as Chairman. Ambassador Eisenhower has wide experience in military and diplomatic fields and an additional perspective which he obtained when his father served as President of the United States for two terms. The Departments of State, Defense, Justice, and the Central Intelligence Agency each have senior representatives serving on the Committee who attend the regular monthly meetings to reflect the views of their departments and the development of an overall Government policy. In addition the Archivist of the United States has been asked to serve as a member of the Committee and has been attending our regular meetings. Second, there have been specific achievements which are worthy of note:

1. There has been a 60% reduction in all authorized classifiers.
2. There has been a 63% reduction in authorized Top Secret classifiers who are also the only individuals authorized to exempt from the automatic declassification schedules.
3. Current lists of authorized classifiers by name and position are maintained by all the departments and submitted to the Interagency Committee on a quarterly basis.
4. Most documents now reflect the required marking requirements.
5. Of 34 departments affected by the Order, the Interagency Committee has reviewed and approved the implementing regulations of 31.
6. All but three of the departments whose regulations have been approved have published appropriate portions in the Federal Register.

7. A series of five Quarterly Reports with forms and instructions have been prepared to assist the Interagency Committee in monitoring the classification program.

8. Detailed instructions have been developed to guide the departments on implementing the data index requirements of the NSC Directive.

9. 177 declassification requests were received from June 1 to October 1. 83 were granted in full; 4 in part. 52 were denied in full and 38 were pending at the time of the report.

Let me turn now to Classification Present. In doing so I would like to focus upon the responsibility of the individual Departments and upon the specific role of records managers in the classification area. Let me begin with several very general observations.

First it is my impression that there has been an unfortunate tendency to separate records management problems from security classification problems. I should just like to see if this observation is borne out by asking you to show by raising your hands how many of you have Top Secret clearances. It appears from the show of hands that it is only about 50%. Clearly unless you have access to the documents you cannot control them.

This segregation of functions between records managers and security officers has in my view been an unhealthy one. Classified documents are nothing more than Government papers which require complicated special handling. Of course, there are many other examples of Government documents not classified which also require forms of special handling.

It is the intention of the Interagency Committee to propose procedures for dealing with classified documents which put records managers back into the security business insofar as we are concerned with the creation, disposition and public access to classified documents.

My second observation regarding records management and the handling of classified documents is that many of the methods used are extremely primitive. Records disposition and retention schedules have not generally been applied to classified documents. Efficient review and accountability procedures have not been established in many Departments. Automated methods for retrieving, reproducing and

accounting for classified documents have not been utilized where it is appropriate. This is unfortunate and the Interagency Committee would like to use its resources to encourage updating of such procedures.

I want to emphasize that the Interagency Committee is not asking that the Departments call upon the expertise of records managers and ignoring the necessity for having such advice itself. In fact, Ambassador Eisenhower has requested the advisory services of the National Archives and Records Service in developing appropriate management reporting systems, uniform standard and optional forms and a handbook of procedures for records managers. The results of some of this work will become evident shortly in the Quarterly Reports which I previously mentioned which will be promulgated by the Interagency Committee as well as the instructions on the data index requirement.

Finally, let me turn to Classification Future. I would like to describe for you some particular areas that the Interagency Committee expects to focus on in the year ahead.

Our Committee cannot be expected to do the job of inspection review on classification which is the responsibility of each Department. We expect to ask and take the following steps to bring you the record managers back into the job of dealing with classified documents:

1. We shall ask all Departments to submit an annual or semi-annual work plan whereby records managers shall inspect and review classified documents to determine instances of classification abuse, take appropriate downgrading or declassification action, and destroy classified records no longer required and having no retention value. We anticipate that the work plan will consist of specific steps for inspecting classified documents originated by a Department. This may include a rotation schedule for inspection of particular offices, an indication of the number of individuals involved, and other matters which would be pertinent.
2. We shall ask the records managers to develop sound procedures for facilitating automatic downgrading and declassification of classified documents. One of the primary objectives of Executive Order 11652 is to reduce Government costs associated with protection and review of classified records. It is up to you as individuals to develop and recommend simple

procedures for locating those documents which may be automatically downgraded or declassified. We would like to have any suggestions you have which would help to achieve this goal. You are the experts in your Departments and for us and can provide tremendous assistance if you want to focus on the problem. At one meeting, I suggested using color-coated covers which would correspond with the declassification year. This is a possible idea; I am sure there are others and that you as the experts would know them better than I.

3. One of the fundamental principles of Executive Order 11652 is its recognition that new approaches must be adopted to ensure that documents previously withheld from the public are organized, indexed and made physically available once there is no longer any need for protection. Many of you may be aware that the National Security Council Directive implementing the President's new Executive Order requires that every Department authorized to originate classified documents shall establish a data index system. I earlier described to you the work of our Committee in developing detailed instructions for satisfying this requirement. The Interagency Committee considers that this is one approach which furthers the requirement of the Executive Order to increase public access to classified documents. We are very much satisfied with the progress which has been achieved in implementing the data index system. But I am sure there are other approaches. We are counting on you the records managers to draw on your experience to suggest additional alternatives which may improve on or otherwise increase public access.

These are three specific areas the Interagency Committee will focus on in the year ahead. I am sure there will be others because we have an active, interested group working to see that the Executive Order is a success.

I should like to make one concluding observation. There has been significant progress since the Executive Order became effective in June and the progress has been particularly noteworthy in a few Departments. On the whole, however, I have been personally disappointed by the lack of initiative and imagination in many Departments in carrying out implementation of the letter and spirit of the Order.

In some Departments there has been two little follow-through to ensure that the Order works. We would like to see this change in the year ahead.

I believe the Executive Order establishes a sound framework for dealing with the problem of documents which require protection in the national security interest. I believe with your cooperation it can and will work. If we are to avoid having classified printed material become the poison that Mr. Courier suggests is true of printed matter, we must work hard to see that the security classification program is fully carried out.

Thank you very much.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 3, 1973

Gail:

Per your request.

RCJ
Richard C. Tufaro

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